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NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE HUB FOR WESTON/MOUNT DENNIS

$3 Million Investment Boosts Family Health Care In One Of Toronto's Priority Neighborhoods

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is investing $3 million to establish a new hub of health and community services for residents of Toronto's Weston/Mount Dennis community, Deputy Premier and Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Our government is committed to working with local communities to ensure that all of our families have better access to family health care closer to home, more opportunities for success and a higher standard of living," said Smitherman.

Weston/Mount Dennis was identified as one of 13 Toronto neighbourhoods most in need of improved community infrastructure in the 2005 Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force report conducted by United Way of Greater Toronto and the City of Toronto.

"The new Weston/Mount Dennis community hub will provide many benefits to the people who need it the most in this community," said Laura Albanese, MPP, York South / Weston. "The services offered by the agencies located in the new facility reflect the direct needs of our community."

"This hub at the Weston/Mount Dennis Satellite CHC will bring together local residents and a broad range of services and programs to strengthen this neighbourhood," said Frances Lankin, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto.

The new Satellite Community Health Centre will provide increased access to the full range of family health care services offered by physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dieticians. CHCs provide essential family health care services for those who have difficulty accessing health care due to barriers such as language, culture, physical disabilities, homelessness, poverty or geographic isolation.

In addition to health care services, the centre will also provide broader community supports such as youth peer support programs, programs to address violence, youth leadership training and skills development, parent and child programs, and outreach to isolated seniors.

"Community health care must aim higher than simply treating illness," said Smitherman. "That's why our government is launching a series of initiatives that will address the underlying conditions that contribute to healthy lives and strong communities."

Today's announcement is part of the McGuinty government's plan to expand opportunity for all Ontarians, which also includes:

- Establishing the Ontario Child Benefit, which will deliver up to $1,100 to low-income children, whether their parents are working or not.
- Raising the minimum wage by $0.75 annually so that it reaches $10.25 by 2010.
- Delivering 35,000 new housing allowances and funding over 18,000 new units of affordable housing
- Delivering 22,000 new child care spaces to ensure that more families have the support they need to raise their children.

"We're delighted to be partnering with the government of Ontario and the United Way on this project," said Lee Fairclough, Chair of the Board of York Community Services. "Working together we will be able to provide a wide range of health care and social services which will be a huge benefit to this community."

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